SINGH): (a) to (c) As informed by the Planning Commission an evaluation study was conducted by the Programme Evaluation Organization of the Planning Commission on the performance of TPDS. The study covered 60 districts, 88 blocks, 16 towns, 176 village panchayats, 240 fair price shops and 3600 households spread voer 18 States. According to the study during 2003-04, the 16 large States were issued 14.07 million tones of BPL quota from the Central Pool. Of this, around 5.93 million tones was delivered to the BPL families and 8.14 million tones intended for them never reached them.

The Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State Governments wherein the Central Government is responsible for procurement of foodgrains, storage and their transportation upto the Principal Distribution Centres of FCI and the State Governments are responsible for identification of beneficiaries, issue them ration cards and distribute foodgrains through a vast network of 4.77 lakh Fair Price Shops scattered all over the country. The reform of the Public Distribution System to improve its efficiency, accountability and effectiveness is an ongoing process. Besides, notification of the Public Distribution System (Control) order, 2001, involvement of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, model citizen's charter and deputation of task force teams to check irregularities and to inspect and monitor the TPDS and the Antyodaya Anna Yojana, Conferences of State Food Secretaries, State Food Ministers and a meeting with all the Members of Parliament was organized recently to discuss issues relating to strengthening of TPDS.

Introducing minimum retail price

3907. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would introduce the insertion of Minimum Retail price instead of Maximum Retail Price on each product for sale in the market in the interest of customers;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(o) whether Government would direct the big companies like Hindustan Lever Limtied, etc., to avoid advertisement charges and stop issuing non-usable items on sale of their standard products thus reducing the cost of their products and benefiting the purchaser; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) No such proposal is under consideration in the Government.

(b) The Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977 require declaration of retail sale price of the package in.the form Maximum Retail Price..(Inclusive of all taxes) (MRP), for information of consumers. This arrangement is only a price declaratory mechanism and not price control mechanism. The said Rules have penal provision, which prevent retail dealer from selling the package at a price higher than the declared MRP, protecting the interest of consumers. Sale of the package at price less than MRP, for whatever reasons, is permitted at it is favourable to buyers.

(c) and (d) There is no proposal under consideration to interfere in the price fixation of commodities sold in pre-packed form, by manufactures packers, as market forces would ensure stabilization of selling price.

Food Subsidy

† 3908. SHRI SURENDRA LATH:
SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the amount sanctioned as food subsidy to various States during the last three years; and

(b) the amount sanctioned and released under this scheme to Orissa and Himachal Pradesh during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) A statement showing the amount of food subsidy released to various States, including Orissa, under the scheme of decentralised procurement of foodgrains during the last three years is given in the Statement. (See below).

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.